

MEMORANDUM

CONFIDENTIAL
SECURITY INFORMATION

A DRAFT SUMMARY OF THE LINE OF ARGUMENT AGREED ON NOVEMBER 15th AT
A PARTIAL MEETING OF THE PANEL IN NEW YORK CITY.

A. As a nation we have got into a position such that it is hardly thinkable for us to undertake any serious effort to limit the arms race--or even to moderate our own dependence upon an unlimited use of the largest possible weapons. We are committed to the development of ever more powerful weapons; both the precedent of 1945 and our own present public national position commit us to the use of such weapons where necessary in the event of hostile aggression.

✓ By federal law, we are committed to a policy of noncooperation and unilateral decision in all of these matters of atomic energy. More and more, both in our grand strategy and in our specific effort to defend the continent of Europe, we are dependent upon our prowess in the field of weapons of mass destruction. And finally, it seems at least possible that military considerations will require us, in the event of war, to launch our massive attack with a rapidity and violence that will make all previous examples of "total war" seem pale and incomplete.

B. The contest in producing weapons of mass destruction is proceeding grimly at an ever more rapid pace. The atomic bomb, in itself, is a weapon of a new order of destructive power. What is

State Dept. review completed

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

--2

less well understood is that it is a weapon of such a character that once any nation knows how to make an atomic bomb, it can expect the total destructive force of its stockpile to multiply at a quite extraordinary rate of speed. The rate of growth of the American stockpile has been startling, and there is no reason to suppose that a similar development is not occurring in the Soviet Union. ^{When} If this is true ~~and~~ we consider simply the rate of expansion of the supplies of fissionable material; the point becomes still sharper if in addition we bear in mind the possibilities of weapons with a thermonuclear, or a biochemical, component. In the end it even becomes necessary to consider the unmeasured but real possibility of a contamination of the atmosphere. The destructive power of atomic stockpiles is of a wholly new order, and in this sense it creates a new and fearful connection between the United States and the U.S.S.R. We seem to be moving toward a situation in which each of the two great powers may have the capacity to wreck the society of the other. Without venturing to predict whether or not, in such a world, catastrophe might be averted by the fear of retaliation, the Panel is persuaded that life in such conditions would be inevitably shadowed by fear and anguish, compared to which our present troubles would seem light indeed.

2

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

--3

C. Yet the Panel has not tried to sketch a full and workable scheme for safety--or even to decide whether it can ^{be} lead national policy to work for the adoption of any such scheme. (Here it may be necessary to explain briefly how we distinguish a "full and workable" scheme from the sort of proposals made in the United Nations thus far--and to remark that we have tried to sketch for our own use some outline of the balance of considerations as it now stands.) We are persuaded that these questions can have no fixed answer, for the outlines of what it seems wise to work for can change rapidly as time passes. Moreover, the proper shape of a scheme for arms control--even in the light of the grim prospect sketched above--must depend on a full estimate of national policy and not simply upon a study of the contest in armaments. So a judgment on this matter would in reality take ^{the Panel} time beyond its assignment.

D. This Panel does not think that either the Soviet danger or the great effort to establish a collective defense in the free world is unimportant. On the contrary, it believes that there is pressing urgency in guarding against the one by doing all we can to develop and strengthen the other. Much of the strength of the United States and her allies must currently come from weapons of mass destruction.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

--4

Nor is there anything remote or trifling in the problems suggested by such words as Berlin, Korea, Iran, and Indo-China--to say nothing of the Saar, Trieste, Suez, and Kashmir.

E. Still, the Panel has not been able to persuade itself that this double goal is sufficient; in its view the character of the arms race is such that policy should be based on three points and not two; the meaning of armaments should be placed fully on a level with the menace of the Soviet Union and the urgency of the defense of the free world. This is exceedingly difficult, for there are many kinds of activity which serve one concern while damaging another--and in some cases it is quite impossible to give full weight to all three. On the other hand, we believe that there are several important steps which can be of real and general value in such a three-point policy and our only firm conclusions relate to six steps of this kind. These conclusions are firm enough to make up for our hesitation in other matters.

F. In the light of these considerations, we reach the following conclusions:

1. There is need for candor about the arms race. The Government should adopt a policy of candor about the character of major weapons, their expanding rate of production, and the

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

--5

enormous and important fact that they are possessed by both sides. There is need for candor both within the Government and outside it--to our people in general and to all responsible officers of the Government in particular. This means that a very much wider circle of officials should know about the arms race, think about it, and talk about it.

2. There is need for a focusing of responsibility in the Government for both thought and action. All major decisions and plans for the development and use of armaments, and all deliberations about their regulation, should have the same care and consideration which are now given to the largest aspects of our resistance to Soviet expansionism and our efforts to organize the free world. Neither plans for strategic bombardment, at one extreme, nor details of disarmament proposals, at the other, should be left to agencies of limited and specialized responsibility. Nor should large decisions in other fields be taken without a full awareness of their meaning with respect to armaments.
3. There is need for a wholly new order of effort in defending the North American continent against weapons of mass destruction. The arms race, in our view, carried enormous dangers to the whole of American policy through the fact that the

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

--6

U.S.S.R. may soon be able to strike a crippling blow against the United States. Such a development would have the gravest kind of adverse effect on all our policies, and we believe that there is urgent need for a major effort to strengthen our continental defense. We would emphasize that one great way to reduce the danger of all weapons is to reduce their effectiveness. There is probably no complete safety in continental defense, but the more that we can get, the better. This is something that can be done even while real arms regulation seems unattainable--and the Panel also believes that each improvement in continental defense may make it less necessary to insist on totally ironclad schemes of arms regulation.

4. There is need for a gradual abandonment of the initiative in advancing new proposals for disarmament through the United Nations. We find with regret that the policy of advancing proposals for disarmament through the United Nations is losing its usefulness. These proposals seem almost inevitably unreal, famed as they are, without any real hope that the Russians will accept them. They seem to suggest that there is available as a real possibility a world of full safety

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

--7

and peace--and this is not really the case at the present. While recognizing that it will not be possible to change our attack suddenly or without preparation, the Panel believes that precisely because the problem of arms regulation is so important it should not now be handled by public discussion in commissions of the United Nations. Of course the United States cannot prevent others from advancing their proposals, but the Panel believes that it can use its right to analyze and comment on any such proposals to clarify the fact that these discussions do not at present really serve the common cause.

5. There is need for a new level of understanding with our major allies on the meaning of atomic armaments. The Panel is persuaded that it is important to get a better understanding with our allies on atomic problems. (This view is generally shared in the Department of State, and so it will probably not be useful to press our reasoning here. Our view of course is that there is need for a common approach to such problems as using atomic weapons in Europe and planning for a possible scheme of adjustment in which the danger of these weapons might be reduced; we are also concerned with the broad objective of holding the free world together.)

CONFIDENTIAL

--8

6. There is need for increased attention to the possibilities that may be found in serious communication with the U.S.S.R.

The Panel believes that one of the central difficulties in all our policy is a fearful ignorance of Russian capabilities and intentions--and that some of our gravest dangers lie in the possibility that Soviet leaders may misread the realities of the arms race and of our own determination. We think that the United States has the diplomatic skills to open serious and significant conversations bearing on such problems, and we believe that even if such conversations should not develop at present into any real negotiations (which may well be impossible), they would bring us much important information and perhaps decrease the likelihood of a disastrous miscalculation on either side.

- G. The Panel is uncomfortably aware that its firm conclusions are none of them easy to execute--and that in the view of many they are highly debatable. While the Panel is in no position to assess the strength of any opposition to the views it has expressed, it seems important to observe that it may be better that proposals of this kind should be ignored than that they should be raised at a time and in a manner such that they could only be rejected with a

CONFIDENTIAL

--9

net goes to the general view which the Panel holds. This does not mean that all difficult courses are undesirable--or that in the view of the Panel the true test of any policy is its current popularity in the Government. But we are a panel of consultants, and we must recognize that what we urge must be weighed against other realities than those which it has been our assignment to consider.

① Political
arrangements must
precede Dis.

② Lessons of Dis
conf.

③ The builder of
an effective defense
must pay heed
to more offensive
armaments less
valuable

④ The Treaty
will all won
dis advantage